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## The Struggle for Employment: Educated Class between the World Wars in Colonial United Provinces

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### *Abstract*

*United Provinces witnessed striking educational growth in 1920s with the establishment of Banaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University, Lucknow University, Kashi Vidyapeeth and other professional institutes. After the number of students started to increase, the struggle for employment became evident and the British government appointed a Departmental Committee under the Presidentship of Minister of Education, Rai Rajeshwar Bali, in 1927 to suggest solutions for unemployment among the educated class. Subsequently, the 1931 census tried to calculate the number of educated unemployed and a United Provinces Unemployment Committee was set up by the colonial government under the Chairmanship of Tej Bahadur Sapru. However, the historiography is silent regarding the struggle for employment of the educated class in United Provinces, especially during the period between World Wars. Viewed in this context, the present article explores the progress of education and tries to locate the struggling career of educated class and unemployment in colonial United Provinces.*

**Keywords:** *United Provinces, Unemployment, Education, Medicine, Engineering, Colonial.*

### **Introduction**

The British rule in India brought about momentous transformation in the field of education, profession and learning. The introduction of English as the medium of instruction in 1835 and the enactment of Woods Despatch, 1854 laid down the foundation of a modern system of education in colonial India. The establishment of the University of Calcutta, University of Madras, University of Bombay in 1857 and other professional institutes led to the profession of law, medicine and engineering. After the passing of the Charter Act of 1853, which insisted on the need of open competition for civil services, the English education system promoted the idea of examination and competition as a requirement for the educational degree and employment in public enterprises. As the nephew of Lord Macaulay, G. O. Trevelyan, argued in his book titled *Competition Wallah* that ‘We must not close our eyes to the undoubted advantages of competition...Why not appoint men by open competition?’. Subsequently, the Public Service Commission, 1886-87, in their report emphasized the need of open competition for provincial and subordinate services. Till 1880s every provincial government prescribed a successful performance in either the middle class-vernacular or middle class anglo-vernacular examination as a qualification for the government service. These changes brought competition and rush for jobs after the number of educated persons started to increase. About the transformation of socio-educational structure, A. G. Clow, the Controller of Labour Bureau, Government of India, noted in 1929 that:

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India is suffering from the clash of two very different systems of thought and civilization, and that the process of adjustment cannot but be painful. The present age is witnessing a steady disintegration of the old social and economic system. For centuries occupations were handed down from father to son. The scribe's son became a scribe; the barber's son could only become a barber and the potter's son a potter. Reading and writing were confined to the higher castes, and, in most parts of India, clerical work was the monopoly of a few castes. The higher forms of literary education of the western type, when introduced, were for a number of years confined to the upper middle classes and the majority of those who passed through the colleges had little difficulty in securing suitable employment. Now the position is altered. Men from all grades can secure admittance to the colleges and higher schools and those who feel that they have, by tradition, a claim to man the clerical professions have to compete with an increasing number of men whose ancestors for centuries never aspired to any such occupation.

United Provinces, one of the states of British India which is presently known as Uttar Pradesh, also witnessed the changes in 1920s and 1930s when the province experienced striking growth in the number of educational institutions between the World Wars, 1918-1939. With the establishment of Banaras Hindu University (1915), Aligarh Muslim University (1920), Lucknow University (1921), Kashi Vidyapeeth (1921), Agra University (1927) and other professional institutes, the number of students increased and the struggle for employment started in United Provinces. The cases of unemployment were reported from the various corners of the province. As a result of it, the government appointed a Departmental Committee under the Presidentship of Rai Rajeshwar Bali, the Minister of Education, and Secretaryship of J. C. Donaldson, the Deputy Secretary to Government, Industries Department, in the year 1927 to suggest solutions for the prevalent unemployment among the middle class. Subsequently, the 1931 census of the province tried to calculate the number of unemployed educated and a United Provinces Unemployment Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Tej Bahadur Sapru in 1934 to go into the question of unemployment among educated young men and suggest practical ways and means for reducing the same. Recently, there have been studies on the development of professions, struggle for jobs and unemployment among educated class in presidency towns. However, the historiography is silent on the issue of unemployment in United Provinces. The development of professions and the struggle for employment amongst the educated youths in United Provinces has not been much explored, especially during the period of World Wars and Great Depression. Dharma Kumar rightly pointed out that the services have been a forgotten sector. Viewed in this context, the present article explores the progress of education and tries to locate the struggling career of educated class and unemployment in colonial United Provinces. To address these issues, the article has elicited data from sources including reports of the Unemployment Committee, census data, debates in the Council of State and Legislative Council, newspapers and other contemporary writings.

### **Educational Development and the Struggle for Employment**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, United Provinces had only one university at Allahabad and an engineering and medical college at Roorkee and Agra respectively. But the province witnessed striking growth in the number of educational institutions in 1920s and 1930s. Apart from the establishment of universities at Banaras, Aligarh, Lucknow and Agra, the setting up of a university at Delhi in 1922 also had an importance for United Provinces. After the Government of India Act of 1919, through which education became a 'transferred subject', educational facilities in province improved substantially. The foundation of King George's Medical College,

Lucknow, Harcourt Butler Technological Institute, Kanpur, and Faculties of Law, Agriculture, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at the Banaras Hindu University in the second and third decade of the twentieth century led to the development of professions of law, medicine, engineering and other courses. The number of recognized educational institutions rose from 12,912 in 1917 to 18,559 in 1922, an increase of 44 percent. Subsequently, the number of students at these institutions increased from 8,05,420 to 1,280,450, a rise of over 50 percent. Between 1918 and 1928, the number of students studying at the universities almost tripled from 582 to 1803 (Table 1). The demand for higher education was so great that the Allahabad University had rejected sixteen percent of applications for admission in the year 1930.

Amidst the increasing number of students, the struggle for employment began for graduates which was evident with the growing number of unsuccessful applications for jobs in various government departments, the main avenue of employment during colonial times. In the years between 1928 and 1935, four competitive examinations for a total of 35 posts of Excise Inspector were held and 771 candidates applied for the same (Table 2). On an average, 22 candidates were competing for one post which explains the extent of struggle for employment. The table manifests that seventeen students having a degree of Bachelor of Law and thirty-three with a Bachelor of Agriculture offered themselves for Excise Inspector after being despair of opportunity in their professional disciplines. Further, the situation was so grave that forty-one applicants applied for unpaid apprenticeship in the Excise Department and the Office of the Inspector-General of Police received 340 applications for the 10 posts of Sub-Inspector in the year 1935. S. T. Hollins, the Inspector General of Police, United Provinces reported that the High School Certificate was the minimum qualification for the post of Sub-Inspector but many of the candidates possessed superior qualifications and noted that:

A large number of young men who had passed the School Leaving Certificate and Intermediate Examinations, and even a few who have passed the B.A. Examination enlisted themselves as Police Constables every year though no educational qualification was necessary...there is undoubtedly general unemployment in all classes and among all occupations. Hundreds of applications from literate and illiterate men from rural areas and from towns are received for all classes of work. Literate posts are insufficient for those who have been educated and literate men are, accepted in a large number for posts in which literacy is not required.

N. C. Mehta, the Collector of Muzaffarnagar, in his evidence submitted to the United Provinces Unemployment Committee reported that for 6 vacancies of Sub-Registrar in the

Year	University Degree		High School Examination		Vernacular-Middle Examination	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1918	577	5	1,468	17	6,126	137
1919	714	8	3,082	21	5,454	90
1920	815	12	2,332	27	6,676	112
1921	742	7	2,644	28	6,550	141
1922	982	13	2,917	37	6,372	97
1923	1,074	6	3,013	29	8,764	157

1924	1,157	14	3,992	51	8,488	145
1925	1,417	20	4,318	61	8,593	205
1926	1,568	30	4,053	52	9,684	265
1927	1,644	20	4,657	82	10,192	332
1928	1,772	31	5,016	76	11,448	281
Total	12462	166	37492	481	88347	1962

Table 1: Increase in Number of Students (1918-1928)

Source: *Report of a Departmental Committee*, 1929, pp. 23-24.

Year	Posts	LL.B.	M.A. & M.Sc.	B.A. & B.Sc.	B.Agri.	B.Com.	Inter	Total	Average for each post
1928-29	10	..	4	99	..	11	85	199	19.9
1929-30	7	1	2	30	..	1	20	54	7.7
1930-31	10	3	9	20	..	..	23	55	5.5
1934-35	8	13	68	236	4	17	125	463	58.0
Total	35	17	83	385	4	29	253	771	22.0

Table 2: Number of Posts and Applications in the Excise Department

Source: *Report of the Unemployment Committee*, 1935, pp. 30-31.

Office of Inspector General of Registration more than 700 applications were received without the post had not been advertised at all in 1931-1932. The applications included a London Ph.D., scores of M.A., LL.B. and graduates passed with first class from universities. In fact, there were some candidates who had secured pretty high places even in the Indian Civil Services Examination but failed to get in for the post. Summing up the situation, R. C. Srivastava, a Sugar Technologist at the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, Kanpur, highlighted that only 20 percent of the educated class had employments of a type of their educational qualification and cases were known of 'graduates selling milk, M.A.'s applying unsuccessfully for junior typists' jobs and Matriculates applying unsuccessfully for cycle peon's jobs.' The number of vacancies in the province was approximately 105 for gazetted posts and 1,243 for non-gazetted posts annually but these figures together were only about one-fifth of the numbers obtaining university degrees and high school certificates in 1928. The supply of educationally qualified persons seeking employment was very much in excess of the demand. In fact, the career prospects in the profession of law, medicine, engineering and other technical courses were also not good.

### Unemployment in the Technical Professions

The most significant of the new professions was the legal. The provision for legal education was made by all the five universities of the province situated at Allahabad, Banaras, Agra, Aligarh, and Lucknow. It attracted a large number of young men. The numbers of lawyers became more than doubled during 1921 and 1931 and the profession became terribly over-crowded. In 1911, 43 persons per mile were dependent on law for their livelihood which increased to 82 in 1931. During the period between 1930 and 1935, 3957 students passed LL.B. degree and more than 5145 enrolled themselves as pleaders, vakils, and advocates at the Allahabad High Court and

Chief Court at Lucknow. However, only 16 persons were taken into the Provincial Judicial Service. Overall, the profession of law was overcrowded. There was not much scope for the law graduates and they had to join various departments of the government, such as, revenue, excise, registration, police and others. About the awful condition of the law profession, Dr. Kailas Nath Katju, one of the leading professionals practicing at the Allahabad High Court, remarked that:

It is notorious that the supply of lawyers has wholly outrun the demand so far as the legal profession is concerned. The condition of the legal profession is deplorable. It is correct to say that a large majority of practicing lawyers are unable to earn incomes adequate to maintain them over in ordinary comfort and the legal profession, which was an honorable profession, has lost a great deal of prestige.

Of all the professions medicine had the sturdiest indigenous tradition. Graduates from the two major centres of medical education, King George's Medical College, Lucknow and Agra Medical School, Agra, were appointed as sub-assistant surgeons in hospitals and some of them also set up their private practices. During the 1933-34 session, 63 licentiates from the Agra Medical School, Agra and 47 graduates from the King George's Medical College, Lucknow passed. But the number of vacancies in the Provincial Medical Service was only five and in the subordinate service seventeen. In the absence of proper employment, the profession of medicine did not appear attractive. In 1911, 129 persons per mile returned themselves as dependent on medical profession and in 1931 reduced to 113 persons. Dealing with the question of unemployment, Colonel R. S. Townsend, the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, United Provinces, noted that the medical graduates offered themselves for employment in the Provincial Subordinate Medical Service on less pay and also as honorary workers in the hospitals undoubtedly indicated the extent of unemployment in the medical profession.

The engineering profession developed out of the need to meet the requirements of the activities of the Public Works Department, the construction of roads, railways, canals, civil, military and irrigation works. The students passed out of two main engineering college of the province, Thomason College of Civil Engineering at Roorkee, and Mechanical and Electrical Engineering College at Banaras Hindu University, relied on state for their job unlike the professions of law and medicine. But the prospect of employment was not optimistic. As a result of it, the total number of students studying at the Thomason College of Civil Engineering reduced from 471 in 1911 to 326 in 1921. Between 1923 and 1934, no recruitment took place in the Buildings and Road Branch of the Civil Engineering Department. Though a total number of 658 candidates, including the students with degrees of overseers and engineering, had applied without any post being advertised. Chhuttan Lal, the Chief Engineer of the Government of United Provinces, in his statement to the Unemployment Committee noted the case of a qualified engineer from Roorkee who served as an engineer for some years but was later forced by the circumstances to take to business, first as a manufacturer of bricks and then as a motor-merchant. The case of racial discrimination was also reported in the appointment of Indian engineers. As Mahabir Prasad, a Professor at the Thomason College of Civil Engineering, stated that the young men coming out from the Engineering College were not being fairly treated in the matter of employment by municipalities and district boards. Altogether, there was not sufficient scope to absorb any appreciable number of engineering trained people.

Considering the fact that United Provinces was essentially agricultural in composition, much importance was given to the establishment of agricultural institutes. The main agricultural

institutes were Agricultural College at Kanpur, Agricultural Institute at Naini and Agricultural Schools at Bulandshahr and Gorakhpur. Apart from it, Banaras Hindu University established an Institute of Agricultural Research particularly for Plant Physiology, Instruction and Research in 1920. The University of Allahabad instituted a course in Agriculture and admitted the first student to it in July 1932. In general, the students of the province were not keen to study agriculture sciences and those who had the interest were facing difficulty in finding proper jobs.

At the Institute of Agricultural Research, Banaras, it was found that out of 74 students of all classes in 1932-33, including B.Sc., M.Sc., and D.Sc., only 20 belonged to United Provinces. 7.4 percent of the successful students of Agricultural School at Gorakhpur found employment in the government service and a similar percentage of students opened their own farms on improved methods, 46.3 percent chose private service and the remaining 38.9 per cent were obliged to work on their small holdings owing to hard competition in service and were anxiously waiting for a chance. Out of 97 students of Agricultural College at Kanpur only 29 found a job. Chaudhri Jaswant Singh and Pandit Nanak Chand raised the question in Legislative Council regarding the non-employment of students from Bulandshar Agricultural School and diploma holders in Agriculture. There was scope for employment of educated men as farm managers, estate managers but the big landlords were not ready to pay a certain respectable amount to a trained graduate.

It is very apparent that the educated class coming out of universities, colleges and technical institutes were struggling for employment. This struggle was of two kinds, firstly, the case in which educated men failed to find employment of any kind at all, while the other case comprised a very large proportion of the unemployed who had succeeded in finding employment of a type for which the education which they had received did not constitute a qualification. Amidst the sustained struggle for employment across the professions, the cases of suicide were reported in newspapers. The newspaper *Liberty* published a report, 'A Woeful Story' in its issue of 27 April 1931, in which a mother killed his starved son and also unsuccessfully tried to kill herself when her husband was wondering in search of employment and remained unable to find a job. Another story, 'Sad End of a Man: Sequel to Unemployment', published by *The Hindustan Times* on 1 June 1931 reported that a young man, Madhusudan Seal aged 22 years, committed suicide as he was unemployed and could not help his father and family at the time of financial need.

As far as the statistics of the exact number of unemployed students was concerned, no steps were taken. Only in the 1931 census, an attempt was made and the calculated number of unemployed students was 1,975. However, the data failed to include many persons who would have registered themselves as unemployed due to two rumours. The first rumour was spread by the volunteers of the Indian National Congress who propagated that the calculation of educated unemployed was a ruse on part of the 'government to secure the names of those unemployed and so probably taking part in the Civil Disobedience Movement with a view to barring them from future employment in government service.' Another rumour was that the government was trying to win over the unemployed by falsely raising their hopes of securing employment. In this context, the precise calculation of educated unemployed could not take place. However, the data collected by 1931 census offered an idea about the extent and nature of unemployment. It was significant that about one-tenth of the unemployed were graduates and one-fourth of the total unemployed belonged to Muslim community.

## **The Causes**

The causes of the educated unemployment were quite complex and lied in the socio-political and economic condition of the province. The root causes were so deeper that the officials declared that from the 'nature of case, no Government can find a panacea.' The existence of unemployment among the educated classes was mainly because of the predominantly literary bias. The system of education was such to produce persons qualified almost exclusively for clerical occupations. As Aparna Basu highlighted that in schools and colleges the teaching of science, technical and vocational subjects was by and large neglected and the emphasis was on the study of literature, logic, politics and philosophy. Out of a total educational budget of Rs 1 crore and 97 lakhs for the year 1928-29, only 11 lakhs were allocated for technical education. The technical education in India thus suffered from want of opportunity and finance to aid scientific research and higher manipulative skill. It grew mainly as a part of general education, concerned more with theory than practice. Subsequently, universities fought shy of instituting degrees in commerce because no openings for people possessing such degrees were readily available in government offices.

The question of unemployment was intimately connected with the development of industries but the economy of United Provinces was primarily agricultural and three out of four inhabitants were dependent on the agriculture. Subsequently, agriculture based subsidiary industries, such as, fruit-growing, dairy-farming, market-gardening, floriculture, sericulture, poultry-farming, canning, and pisciculture was not developed. As Jawaharlal Nehru in his presidential address of Indian National Congress at Faizpur session stated that 'industry cannot expand properly because of the economic and financial policy of the Government.' Between 1881 and 1921, the urban population of United Provinces increased by 2.6 percent as against 3.8 percent increase of the rural population. In this regard, it was remarked in the census that there had been no appreciable development of commerce or industry to attract people to the town. Apart from the lack of industrial opportunities, the Post-War Depression was one of the major reasons of unemployment during the period under review.

The economic depression affected the employment of both educated and uneducated communities. In the years immediately after the First World War, the people of United Provinces were confronted by a severe economic crisis. Bad harvests, influenza epidemic of 1918 and the end of wartime contracts put hardship on people. Nearly four lakh thirteen thousand soldiers of the province, recruited as combatants and non-combatants, were demobilized. The economic depression became severe particularly during the years 1929 and 1934. The retrenchment policy during depression days brought shrinkage to employment market for young graduates. A special Retrenchment Committee was appointed by the Government of United Provinces in 1931 and on its recommendations the government ordered the abolition of a number of posts and consequent organizational changes. Out of the seven professorships sanctioned in 1922 at Thomason College of Civil Engineering, Roorkee, four were abolished. As a consequence, only three professors, two in civil engineering and one in mathematics remained. One of the two lectureships in mechanical engineering and two of the five instructorships for the overseer class were abolished. Moreover, the principal was also advised to teach. The department of drawing and surveying and applied science were abolished. In the irrigation branch of Public Works Department, 5 gazetted and 184 non-gazetted posts and in Indian Civil Services 13 posts were removed. Keeping the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee in focus, about 3,000 employees of Settlement Department, 79 of Agriculture Department and 1678 of Posts and Telegraphs Department were retrenched. In Police Department, 383 posts of Government

Railway Police were retrenched and only 51 posts of naiks were created against it. In the Buildings and Roads Branch of Public Works Department, 266 employees were retrenched. The retrenchment policy of the government during Great Depression spurred the unemployment rate which was later questioned by the nationalist leaders.

### **The Imperial Response and Nationalist Reaction**

The rise of unemployment became an important issue in the debates in the Council of State and Legislative Assembly. On 7 August 1926, Pt. Nanak Chand asked a question in the United Provinces Legislative Council to ascertain the situation of unemployment of educated Indians. Subsequently, a resolution was moved by Sir P. C. Desikachari in the Council of State on 15 February 1928 for appointing a central committee to investigate the problem of unemployment. The spokesman of the government in the Council of State, Sir Arthur McWatters replied that:

The detailed enquiry is, in the first instance at any rate a problem for the Provincial Governments and we are satisfied that they are very much alive to it and are dealing with it. So, for the present we do not see any need for a central committee. We think that it is a matter which is primarily for the Provincial Governments to deal with...that the problem is one which must be tackled in the first instance by local Governments and local bodies...and more particularly the 'transferred' sides of local Governments can apply.

Altogether, the Government of India put aside their responsibility of tackling the unemployment problem and expected 'transferred side' of the provincial government to take suitable measures. This is to be noted that the question of employment was intimately connected with the development of big industries and the development of big industries, in its turn, raised many intricate questions of policy relating to finance, currency, tariffs, and others which were clearly outside the scope of the provincial governments whether transferred or reserved side. Hence, the colonial government was not interested in tackling the problem of unemployment and wanted to impose it on provincial governments, particularly to the 'transferred' side, led by elected (Indian) members who had no control over finance.

Subsequently, the attitude of provincial government was very inactive. Pandit Yajna Narayan Upadhyaya, a member of the United Provinces Legislative Council, moved a resolution in the Council on 20 August 1925 to appoint a committee consisting of seven members, five elected by the council and two nominated by the government, to suggest ways and means to alleviate the unemployment prevailing among the educated middle classes. But the government opposed the resolution. A subsequent resolution by Nawab Muhammad Liaqat Ali Khan to collect statistics of middle-class unemployment was opposed by the government in Council. The recommendations of the Departmental Committee on unemployment, such as, formation of Employment Bureau at Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur and Agra, development of agriculture based industries and others were also not taken up.

The seriousness of the unemployment problem attracted the attention of the nationalist leaders, Swaraj Party and Indian National Congress. It became an important issue of the criticism of colonial rule by mid 1920s. Swaraj Party in their election manifesto of 1924 stated that:

Unemployment is as well known very rife in our urban population and agriculture alone does not any longer suffice to provide our growing population with their daily bread. The only sound solution is to so develop the various industries in the country that they may provide wider and wider canoes of employment to our rising generation.

Srinivas Iyengar in his presidential address of the Indian National Congress in 1926 at Guwahati Session said that:

Next to Swaraj, the greatest of India's needs is the relief of poverty and unemployment...Swaraj has to be won before we can establish industries on a large scale and adequately deal with the problem of poverty and unemployment. In the meantime the Congress party in the several legislatures should make every attempt to get laws passed compelling the Government to relieve unemployment by the establishment of state industries, by opening up of new tracts for cultivation and in other ways. It should also educate the country and link unemployment to the Swaraj movement in such a way as to produce an increasing amount of pressure on the Government.

In an article titled 'Cure of Unemployment', published in *Young India* on 1 July 1928, Gandhi wrote about the growing menace of unemployment. The Independence League, founded in 1928 by the 'radical' wing of Indian National Congress led by Jawahar Lal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose called for an understanding of the problem of unemployment among youths. The Congress Working Committee in its meeting at Banaras on 15 January 1928 resolved that the prevention of unemployment was not within the scope of party but they set up an Employment Bureau and started to employ and pay those volunteers who were unemployed. The Nehru Report, 1928 recommended that 'all such unemployed as are on the state register of unemployed should be included as franchise.' A pamphlet named *Bijli*, published from Gorakhpur in 1930, contained a song titled 'Students: An Appeal' whereas *Satyagraha Samachar* raised the case of the struggle of educated class for employment in its issue of 23 April 1930. At the Karachi Session, Indian National Congress demanded for the protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment. The agrarian programme finalized at the Lucknow Session of Congress highlighted that 'the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry.' In the election manifesto of 1936, Congress party declared that the:

Poverty and unemployment have long been the lot of our peasantry and industrial workers; today they cover and crush other classes also-the artisan, the trader, the small merchant, the middle class intelligentsia. For the vast millions of our countrymen the problem of achieving national independence has become an urgent one, for only independence can give us the power to solve our economic and social problems and end the exploitation of our masses.

In wake of the sustained criticism by nationalist leaders and political parties, some 'fundamental' works were taken up by the Government of United Provinces in late 1930s. A Hydro-Electric Scheme was set up by William Stampe in the eight districts- Moradabad, Badaun and Bijnor, Saharanpur, Muzaffargarh, Meerut, Bulandshahr and Aligarh. The scheme provided employment to thousands of educated professionals. In October 1936, the government announced to establish Provincial Employment Board, agricultural improvement centres, industrial credit company, small-scale finance and marketing to provide practical training in industry and agriculture, and support rural medical practitioners through subsidies. Subsequently, Rs. 4 lakhs annually were decided to be kept aside for expenditure on measures of unemployment relief. The late initiatives were constructive, but could not relieve the menace of unemployment and struggle for jobs.

## **Concluding Remarks**

From discussion on the subject, it is apparent that during the British rule in India socio-educational transformation of India took place. The introduction of English education led to the development of professions like law, medicine, engineering and necessitated a regular system of competitive examination. Amidst the establishment of several educational institutes in United Provinces in 1920s, the number of educated class increased which in turn pushed the rush for jobs. The problem of unemployment became one of the acute socio-economical and educational issues during the period between two World Wars. But the post-colonial historiography is silent in this regard. The lack of technical education and industries limited the avenues of employment whereas the Great Depression led to the retrenchment of various government posts. The colonial officials tried to resist the problem of unemployment during the debates in the Legislative Assembly and Council of State. In a colonial regime, the struggle for employment was perceived as a 'residual' problem.

Native intelligentsia and Indian National Congress reacted strongly against the problem of unemployment and criticized the government inactive attitude. They related the problem of educated unemployment with the goal of *swaraj*. Congress employed unemployed youths in volunteer organization which helped in the spread of the nationalism in far-flung areas. It might also be argued that the rise of unemployment among educated youth made more people available for political work. In this regard, the colonial government observed that failed B.A.'s, students and paid volunteers allegedly accounted for the success of nationalist agitation. But educated youth did not become 'nationalist' because their employment opportunity was curtailed. However, unemployment made them more aware of their lack of rights, of control over their own futures and poverty of self-respect in a colonial regime.

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